

HOPE AFRICA COLLECTIVE

2025 SUMMER SERVICE PROJECT

CADEN CYR AND JACKSON HEIS

THE ISSUE

Youth unemployment in Cape Town's townships is alarmingly high, with a youth (ages 15-34) unemployment rate of 45.5%. Many have never held formal employment and long-term joblessness perpetuates cycles of poverty. A major issue is the skills gap, as many young people graduate with qualifications that do not align with labor market needs. Even those who complete tertiary education often struggle to find work, since the economy favors higher-skilled industries that exclude a large portion of the workforce. Without access to relevant training and job opportunities, unemployment remains a persistent challenge.



THE ORGANIZATION

Hope Africa Collective is a nonprofit organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty through education, economic empowerment, and life skills training. Its programs equip individuals with skills in financial literacy, business development, and spiritual formation. Hope Africa Collective also operates social enterprises like The Printery and Themba Tots, which provide both training and employment opportunities. Through these initiatives, the organization empowers individuals to build stable futures while strengthening their communities.



THE LOCATION

Cape Town's townships remain deeply shaped by apartheid-era segregation, which forcibly relocated non-white communities to poorly resourced, isolated areas. The Group Areas Act (1950) displaced thousands, pushing Black and Coloured South Africans into townships far from economic hubs with limited infrastructure, schools, and employment opportunities. After apartheid ended in 1994, these spatial and economic divisions persisted, leaving many township residents cut off from quality education and stable jobs. The legacy of underfunded schools and restricted access to skilled labor markets continues to reinforce economic exclusion, making it difficult for young people to find pathways to employment.



Our Project

OUR WHY

Caden: South Africa has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world, which highlights the urgent need for innovative solutions to create job opportunities. I am deeply passionate about using entrepreneurship as a tool to combat this issue and foster self-reliance.

Jackson: I find purpose in youth development and in empowering individuals to reach their full potential. This passion motivated and energized me to help address Cape Town and South Africa's unemployment crisis.

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING



We came to Cape Town eager to experience a new culture, but we didn't anticipate how profoundly it would shape the way we see the world. By spending time in local communities, listening to personal stories, and being welcomed into daily life, we gained a deeper appreciation for South African customs and values. At Hope Africa Collective, we experienced "tea time" each morning, a mandatory pause in the day to connect with one another. It was a reminder that here, relationships take priority over the relentless task-oriented pace we often see in America. Most importantly, we learned that true cultural understanding begins with being present, listening first, and letting go of our assumptions.



SCHOLAR IMPACT

Joint:

1. Training Programs Support

Caden and Jackson worked together daily to support multiple programs, including Trade Skills, Hair & Beauty, and the Life Development program. Their work involved collaborating with facilitators, engaging with students, and assisting in a variety of training activities.

Caden's Deliverables:

1. Data Collection for program assessment

Using Google Forms Caden collected qualitative and quantitative data from the Hair and Beauty and Trade Skills Programs. The data is organized in Google Sheets to ensure consistent tracking of key metrics and make data readily available.

2. Development of Data Dashboards

Using Looker Studio, Caden created dashboards for the aforementioned programs to track key performance indicators (KPIs), such as program satisfaction and skill mastery. Caden collaborated with HAC staff and program participants to refine the KPIs and develop a user friendly method of observing data.

Jackson's Deliverables:

1. Pricing Strategy

Jackson conducted market research on competitors' pricing to develop a competitive pricing guide for The Printery. This will help align their pricing with the broader market and needs in Cape Town, while providing a standardized and dependable structure for growth.

2. Marketing Initiatives

Jackson analyzed profit margins for each product to identify the best targets for growth. He also created marketing tools such as tailored WhatsApp messaging and a social media template with a posting schedule. This will expand visibility and attract customers, ensuring long-term marketing sustainability.